

UCL Institute of Mental Health Small Grant Funding 2020/21 academic year



Introduction

Mental health is one of the biggest challenges that the world faces. In the UK, up to 1 in 6 adults will experience a mental health problem in any given year. Mental illness is the largest single source of world economic burden and it has a disproportionately adverse effect on the most vulnerable in society.

Led by Prof Anthony David, the UCL Institute of Mental Health (IoMH) has been created to realise the ambitious vision of building a world-leading centre for research into mental disorders. The IoMH aims to attract the best clinical academics and scientists in the fields of mental health and illness to work, train and collaborate under its auspices.

Mental health is a key strategic priority for UCL and there is already an excellent record in mental health research. Research and practice are widely distributed across existing UCL Divisions, Centres, Institutes and NHS partners, and there are considerable opportunities to strengthen the research base and enhance infrastructure.

As part of its commitment to support mental health research, the IoMH has established a small grants scheme with a commitment to award £25,000 in the coming academic financial year. Applications can be for up to £10,000 but requests for smaller awards are also encouraged. A list of last year's awarded projects can be found here (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/mental-health/research/small-grant-funding>).

Eligibility

Applications must include at least two UCL staff applicants with employment contracts which extend beyond the end of the grant period (31st July 2021).

In order to demonstrate our support for interdisciplinary mental health research, we have stipulated that applicants must come from more than one department. External partnerships with other academic institutions, the NHS, local authorities, charities, commercial organisations, community groups or policy-making bodies are encouraged where of relevance to the outputs. Applications which demonstrate a novel approach to interdisciplinary, or propose the development of new cross-disciplinary collaborations will be prioritised.

Early-mid career researchers (within five years of your first postdoctoral appointment) are particularly encouraged to apply. If you do not fit this criteria but feel you are still an early career researcher please contact us and we will be happy to discuss.

Applications can be on any mental health topic that meets the eligibility criteria. However we have chosen some priorities.

Priority themes

- **Mental health in relation to COVID-19**
Projects related to COVID-19 and its impact on mental health or mental health services are particularly welcome.
- **Basic neuroscience of mental illness**
Projects that are related to the mechanistic understanding of mental illness are encouraged, although any area of basic mental health neuroscience will be considered.

Given the current coronavirus pandemic we will expect applicants to devise protocols that are protected from some of the consequences of lockdown including use of telemedicine/digital health or remote assessments. Similarly, requests for new analyses of already collected data/samples/specimens will be considered provided a strong case is made that the proposed work would not be possible without the additional requested funding.

Applicants are asked to state whether or not they already have the relevant research ethical approvals or require amendment to existing approvals.

Outputs

We will consider a range of project outputs including peer-reviewed publications, reports, workshops, symposia or conferences. Target audiences could include researchers, academics, patients, carers or members of the public. Outputs that focus on public engagement are also welcomed.

While the IoMH is unable to provide logistical support for projects, we will take an active role in promoting any events or activities.

Successful applicants will be asked to submit a brief project status report in the first three months, which should highlight any issues with progress and appropriate mitigation plans.

Applicants will be responsible for submitting a brief final report no later than 31st August 2021 describing the outputs of the project and any planned follow-up activity (e.g. grant applications or additional events), alongside any communications or images documenting the project. The IoMH may refer to the information contained in the final report in its own annual report and communications.

Costs

Costs relating to any of the outputs listed above, or to pilot studies or other exploratory work for larger grant applications (including medical imaging costs, lab costs and data access) are permitted. While we are unable to fund salary costs for applicants, staff costs related to the project (e.g. for a PhD student or research assistant to collect data) are permitted. We cannot fund bench fees or teaching "buy out".

The budget section of the application describing anticipated expenditure must be completed with costs appropriate to the proposal and approved by the lead applicant's head of department. Any funds not spent by 31st July 2021 must be returned to the IoMH.

If an application is successful and accepted by both UCL applicants, the funds will be transferred to the lead applicant's department. We will require a formal budget within one month of the award.

Timescale

We will be funding activities to take place within the UCL financial year (1st August 2020 to 31st July 2021). Projects may be of any duration, but must be ready to start by August 2020 with all activities having taken place by 31st July 2021.

How to apply

The application form can be found on our website: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/mental-health/research>. Please send your completed application form to Arann Rowe (a.rowe@ucl.ac.uk) no later than 5pm on 30th June 2020. Applications will be considered by an expert panel of UCL staff and external partners.